



State of North Dakota
Department of Public Instruction

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**North Dakota State Plan to
Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent
Educators**

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Introduction

In July 2014, Secretary Duncan announced our Excellent Educators for All initiative, designed to move America toward the day when every student in every public school is taught by excellent educators. As part of the initiative, consistent with section 1111(b)(8)(C) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), each State educational agency (SEA) must submit to the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), a State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators (State Plan) that ensures “poor and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers” as required by section 1111(b)(8)(C) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA).

Equality of opportunity is a core American value. Equal educational opportunity means ensuring the schools have the resources they need to provide meaningful opportunities for all students to succeed, regardless of family income or race. To accomplish this goal, all students must have equitable access to a safe and healthy place to learn, high-quality instructional materials and supports, rigorous expectations and course work, and, most critically, excellent educators to guide learning. Yet, too often, students from low-income families and students of color are less likely than their peers to attend a school staffed by excellent educators, and are more likely than their peers to attend a school staffed by inexperienced educators or educators rated as ineffective. These inequities are unacceptable, and it is essential that a priority be placed on working collaboratively to ensure all children have access to the high-quality education they deserve, and all educators have the resources and support they need to provide that education for all children.

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) submits this State Equity Plan for meeting the Title I and Title II requirements under ESEA. This narrative and all annotated support materials attached herein constitute the full state plan for meeting the Excellent Educators for All initiative. The State of North Dakota is committed to ensuring every public school student will graduate from high school college or career ready.

In North Dakota, we have historically had a firm practice in place that all teachers have to be highly qualified. When the Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) requirements were enacted in No Child Left Behind (NCLB), North Dakota followed suit and changed our state law to align with ESEA. North Dakota has had 100% of our teachers highly qualified in all schools regardless of the poverty level. In going through the process again to update our State Equity Plan, it remained clear that there remains only a minimal gap across the state with regard to the rate that poor students are taught by an unqualified teacher compared to students who are not poor. There is, of course, always room for improvement, especially with something as important as ensuring equity for all North Dakota students. The NDDPI remains committed to addressing the limited gaps that do exist to make improvements statewide.

North Dakota is a state that strongly believes in and supports local control. Therefore, the role of the NDDPI is to submit a State Equity Plan that provides our schools and districts with

technical assistance, strategies and ideas to help them implement better plans, and policies within their school system that will ultimately ensure all North Dakota students are taught by excellent educators. It is not the role of the NDDPI to over regulate or force districts to implement certain strategies.

The intent of the North Dakota State Equity Plan is to ensure poor and minority students are not taught by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers at higher rates than their counterparts. In order to have all students reach proficiency, it is imperative every student has a highly qualified teacher. Teachers have a critical role in actualizing this commitment; thus, NDDPI is also committed to ensuring every child has a competent, caring, and effective teacher.

Research clearly points to the power of quality teaching in improving student academic achievement. Thus, this equitable distribution plan will:

- 1) Determine where inequities in teacher assignments exist in North Dakota public elementary and secondary schools;
- 2) Locate statewide disparities including disparities within larger districts; and,
- 3) Highlight strategies for eliminating these inequities to promote the long-term placement of effective teachers with the children who need them the most.

Definition of “Excellent Educators”

NCLB mandates all teachers be highly qualified. The requirement that teachers be highly qualified applies to all elementary or secondary school teachers employed by a public local educational agency who teach a core academic subject (e.g., English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography). The term “highly qualified” means the teacher:

1. Has obtained full state certification from ESPB as a teacher or passed the state teacher licensing examination and holds a license to teach in the state, and does not have certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis;
2. Holds a minimum of a bachelor’s degree; and,
3. Has demonstrated subject-matter competency in each of the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches, in a manner determined by the state and in compliance with federal statute.

The statutory definition subject-matter includes additional elements that apply somewhat differently to teachers new and not new to the profession, and to elementary and secondary school teachers. Such differentiations are defined in various sections of the NCLB and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

According to the federal definition, almost all teachers in the state of North Dakota meet the highly qualified requirement. However, being “highly qualified” does not necessarily translate to “highly effective” teaching. In recent years, there has been a shift to teacher effectiveness.

Currently, the NDDPI is updating teacher evaluation guidelines to meet current thinking around teacher evaluation practices. The NDDPI is also developing a state teacher evaluation model that can be used by districts if their current teacher evaluation system does not meet the updated guidelines. All North Dakota districts are required to use a teacher evaluation system meeting the updated guidelines in the 2015-2016 school year.

Overview of the Equity Plan Development Process

To develop the North Dakota State Equity Plan, the NDDPI staff used a four step process. First, education stakeholders from across North Dakota were identified and requested to be a part of the State Equity Initiative Planning Committee, which was an integral part of ensuring the State Equity Plan being developed was authentic and feasible for North Dakota public schools and districts. Second, state-level data were gathered to determine where equity strengths and gaps existed in North Dakota. Third, using the state-level data, a root cause analysis process was conducted to identify the source of the equity gaps. Fourth, practical strategies to eliminate the equity gaps based on the identified root causes were selected for implementation by appropriate education stakeholders. The remainder of this plan focuses on the details of each of these four steps.

Stakeholder Engagement

The NDDPI understands the importance of obtaining broad stakeholder input in any statewide initiative and most certainly in the development of this State Equity Plan. We believe that stakeholder input is a strength of our North Dakota plan. North Dakota had created a committee when we began working on our ESEA Flexibility waiver. To establish our State Equity Initiative Planning Committee, the NDDPI went back to our ESEA Waiver Committee as a start and then updated that group. Following this established process was helpful to both the field and NDDPI personnel as it was a familiar process that was used successfully two years ago when the state created an ESEA Flexibility Waiver application. The committee represents a comprehensive group of key stakeholders across the state. More than 19 various stakeholder groups are represented on the committee.

The State Equity Initiative Planning Committee list is included in the plan as Appendix A. The NDDPI was proactive after receiving written notice by the USDE that each state needs to submit an equity plan by June 1, 2015. In November 2014, NDDPI staff began the process to establish an Equity Initiative Planning Committee. Careful consideration was given to ensure there would be broad and diverse representation and that all key education stakeholder groups were included. The committee includes 26 members representing the many different stakeholder groups across the state including the following:

NDDPI Unit Directors	North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission
NDDPI State Superintendent	North Dakota Regional Education Associations
NDDPI Title I Committee of Practitioners	North Dakota United (ND Teacher Union)
North Dakota Association of School Administrators	North Dakota University System
North Dakota Association of Secondary School Principals	Office of the Governor
North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders	Pathfinder Parent Center/IDEA Advisory Committee
North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education	Teacher Education Programs – North Dakota University System
North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board	North Central Comprehensive Center at McREL International
North Dakota English Language Learners	Center on Great Teachers and Leaders

In reviewing the list of stakeholders in Appendix A, it may appear certain groups were only represented by one member (ELL, parents, Special Education). However, many of the stakeholders had dual representation. The NDDPI felt strongly about having a committee that wasn't too large, as then it becomes more difficult to make progress and get work done in a timely manner.

The NDDPI wanted the committee to have a manageable number; we knew from past experience that a smaller sized group is more productive. Each of the stakeholder members were also responsible to go back to their collective groups all throughout the process to gather feedback so each group was adequately represented.

Stakeholder Meetings

The State Equity Initiative Planning Committee convened four times between December 2014 and June 2015. The NDDPI State Superintendent, Kirsten Baesler, opened each meeting with welcome remarks to the Committee. Her attendance at these meetings demonstrated the importance of the equity plan to the Committee members and set the tone that stakeholder input is valued and critical to the equity plan. Further, she fully supported the NDDPI staff in the development of the North Dakota State Equity Plan.

The Committee had its first meeting on December 16, 2014. At this meeting, NDDPI staff provided key background information about the Excellent Educators for All initiative, the process that would be used to develop the North Dakota state plan, and their role or representation in the development of the North Dakota state plan. At this first meeting, the Committee also reviewed data provided by the NDDPI.

On February 19, 2015, the Committee had a second meeting. During this meeting, NDDPI staff provided an update on the ESEA authorization and potential impact on the North Dakota state plan. The Committee also reviewed data bar charts created to easily reveal equity gaps. Then, staff from the North Central Comprehensive Center and Center on Great Teachers and Leaders co-facilitated a root cause analysis process to identify the root causes of the identified equity gaps. Committee members provided their input on what the root causes are for each of the equity gaps identified.

On April 1, 2015, the Committee convened for a third meeting. During this meeting, NDDPI and North Central Comprehensive Center staff co-facilitated a process to gather feedback on draft sections on the North Dakota state plan that had been drafted thus far. Further, the Committee members were provided a process for gathering feedback from their stakeholders about the North Dakota state plan. This feedback was provided back to the NDDPI for integration into the North Dakota state plan.

On May 14, 2015 the Committee had its fourth and final meeting. At this meeting, NDDPI and North Central Comprehensive Center staff provided the Committee members with the feedback received from the Committee members' stakeholders as well as the Equitable Access Support Network. They also co-facilitated a process to gather additional feedback from the Committee members on the full draft of the North Dakota state plan.

Authenticity of Stakeholder Engagement

Great care was taken to ensure our stakeholder engagement was broad and authentic. The NDDPI created a similar statewide committee to review and study the possibility of North Dakota applying for an ESEA flexibility waiver. We went back to this committee as our base for creating the State Equity Initiative Planning Committee. We then added members to fill in the gaps identified to insure we have representation from all stakeholder groups that had extensive knowledge and experience about education in North Dakota, including elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education. The NDDPI believes the Committee created has authentic representation and is a true reflection of individuals with a vested interest in ensuring all students are taught by excellent educators.

Receiving and Incorporating Stakeholder Input

Throughout the state equity plan development, the NDDPI staff encouraged the Committee members to provide their input and feedback into North Dakota's plan. Gathering their input and feedback was intensively performed during the four Committee meetings. Further, the NDDPI staff provided Committee members with a process to gather and document feedback from their organization's stakeholders on the draft state equity plan. See Appendix B for the documentation form Committee members completed and submitted to the NDDPI staff.

Continued Stakeholder Engagement

The NDDPI will continue to engage stakeholder committee members in order to ensure the State Equity Plan is implemented as intended. As guidance is created and strategies put in place, all State Equity Initiative Planning Committee members will be included in the disseminated information so that there is statewide awareness of those who contributed to the information as well as to enable committee members to follow up with districts. The committee members will also share the information with staff within their organization as well as their organization's stakeholders.

The NDDPI will also periodically bring together committee members to review the status of the plan and discuss implementation. Monitoring data will be used during these discussions. Committee members will also be surveyed to gather input and feedback on how implementation is progressing. Finally, the NDDPI intends to employ another strategy of joining existing meetings for ongoing engagement in the fall of 2015.

Equity Strengths and Gaps

Key Terminology

The NDDPI defines the key equitable access terms in the following manner:

- Inexperienced teacher – teachers having three or less years of teaching experience.
- Unqualified teacher – teachers who are not qualified according to North Dakota state licensure laws to teach a specific course.
- Out-of-field teacher – teachers who have been assigned to teach a class for which they are not highly qualified. This category does not exist in North Dakota as it is not allowable under state or federal law to assign an educator to teach a class for which they are not considered highly qualified.
- Economically disadvantaged (or poor) student – a child who is eligible for free or reduced price meals.
- Minority student – a student having racial or ethnic origins in any group other than the majority for the state.
- Educators – the group of professionals who are the focus of the State Plan. The NDDPI considers the term educators to include teachers, principals, and other school-based instructional staff. The NDDPI encourages an SEA to consider all educators when developing its State Plan because, although ESEA section 1111(b)(8)(C) focuses on student access to teachers, all educators are vital to students' success and their preparation for college or careers.

- Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) – independent board responsible for teacher licensure, teacher education program approval, professional development and professional practices.
- Excellent Educators – High quality educators who guide and support all students in getting and remaining on track to graduate from high school ready for college or careers (i.e. effective teachers). Future determinations of “excellent educators” will be based on teacher evaluations once our process and tools are completed.
- Equity Gap – refers to the difference between the rate at which students from low-income families or students of color are educated by excellent educators and the rate at which other students are educated by excellent educators. By statute, a State Plan must, at a minimum, address the difference between the rate at which students from low income families or students of color are taught by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers and the rate at which other students are taught by these teachers. An SEA has the discretion to use school- or student-level data to identify equity gaps. The State Equity Plan Initiative Planning Committee considered a percentage difference of >5.0% an *equity gap* while a percentage difference of ≤5.0% was considered an *equity strength*. Further, equity gaps were identified by the State Equity Plan Initiative Planning Committee members given their extensive knowledge, experience, and expertise regarding education in the state of North Dakota.
- Equitable Access – describes the situation in which students from low-income families and students of color are educated by excellent educators at rates that are at least equal to the rates at which other students are educated by excellent educators. An SEA has discretion in whether and how to define this term for the purpose of its State Plan. By statute, a State Plan must, at a minimum, address how the SEA will ensure students from low-income families and students of color are not taught at higher rates than other students by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers. However, the NDDPI encourages an SEA to adopt a more ambitious definition of “equitable access” that reflects the fact that certain subgroups of students — including students with disabilities and English Learners as well as students from low-income families and students of color — have been historically underserved. As a result, they may need greater access to excellent educators than their peers in order to get and remain on track to graduate from high school ready for college or careers.
- Regional Education Association (REA) – a group of school districts seeking to improve their educational programs and services through cooperation and pooling of resources. NDREA is a network of eight REAs in North Dakota. In North Dakota, 93% of all public school districts in the state are members of an REA. Over 98% of all public school students in the state are served by an REA. Each REA offers unique programs and services based on the needs of the region.

- High Poverty School – refers to schools with poverty percentages that are 40% or higher.
- Low Poverty School – refers to schools with poverty percentages below 40%.

Data Sources

The Management Information Systems within the NDDPI categorized all North Dakota public schools into the highest and lowest quartile of percentage of enrolled students who are “poor students” or “minority students”. These schools are designated as either “high poverty schools”, “low poverty schools”, “high minority schools”, or “low minority schools. Thus, to identify inequities related to “inexperienced teacher”, “unqualified teacher”, “out-of-field teacher”, “poor student”, and “minority student” as required by USDE based on the *State Plans to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators: Frequently Asked Questions* disseminated November 2014, NDDPI developed the following guiding questions to focus data analysis:

1. To what extent are “high poverty schools” being taught by an “inexperienced teacher” compared to non-“low poverty schools”?
2. To what extent are students in “high minority schools” being taught by an “inexperienced teacher” compared to students in “low minority schools”?
3. To what extent are “high poverty schools” being taught by an “unqualified teacher” compared to non-“low poverty schools”?
4. To what extent are students in “high minority schools” being taught by an “unqualified teacher” compared to students in “low minority schools”?
5. To what extent are “high poverty schools” being taught by an “out-of-field teacher” compared to non-“low poverty schools”?
6. To what extent are “high minority schools” being taught by an “out-of-field teacher” compared to “low minority schools”?

For guiding questions 5 and 6, “out-of-field teachers” are considered unqualified in North Dakota. Further, North Dakota does not allow out-of-field teachers to teach in North Dakota schools. Thus, the guiding questions related to out-of-field teachers do not pertain to North Dakota.

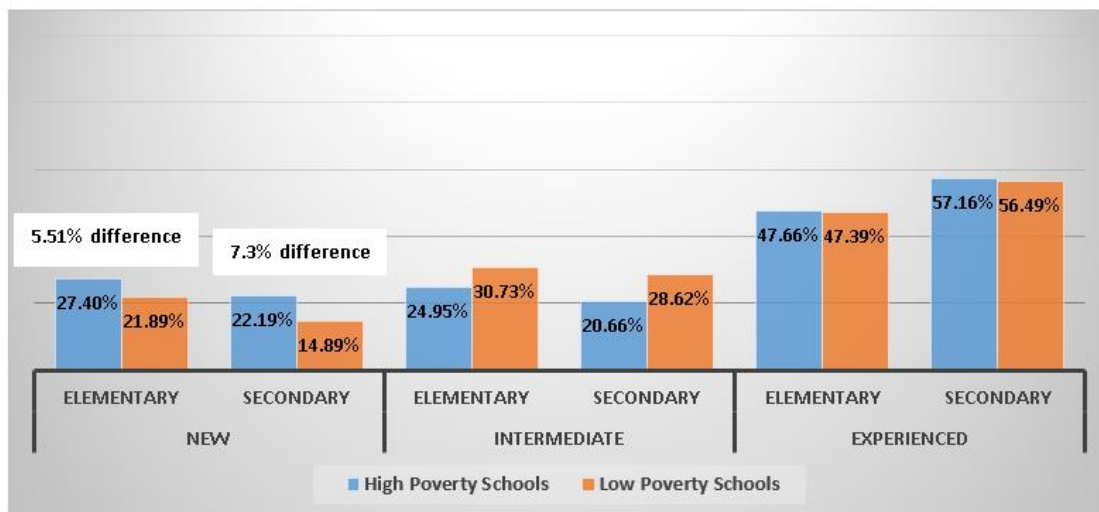
The following data sources were used to answer the guiding questions and determine the equity gaps in North Dakota: North Dakota Department of Public Instructions Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT) report for the 2013-2014 academic year (HQT Report) and Educator Equity Profile for North Dakota based on 2011-2012 academic year (State Equity Profile). The HQT Report identifies teachers who are deemed highly qualified according to North Dakota Century Code for schools that have large and small populations of impoverished students by core courses (e.g., reading/language arts, mathematics, science, foreign language, social studies, and art), school type (e.g., elementary and secondary), and school enrollment (e.g., <100, 100-250, 251-500, 501-1,000, and >1,000 students). The State Equity Profile provides comparisons of various educator characteristics, such as those in their first year of teaching or not certified, within schools that have large and small populations of impoverished students.

Additionally, a survey of the State Equity Initiative Planning Committee was administered in December 2014 (Planning Committee Survey). The Planning Committee Survey asked the State Equity Plan Initiative Planning Committee members to identify what they think the top three needs are for North Dakota schools.

Identification of Equity Strengths and Gaps

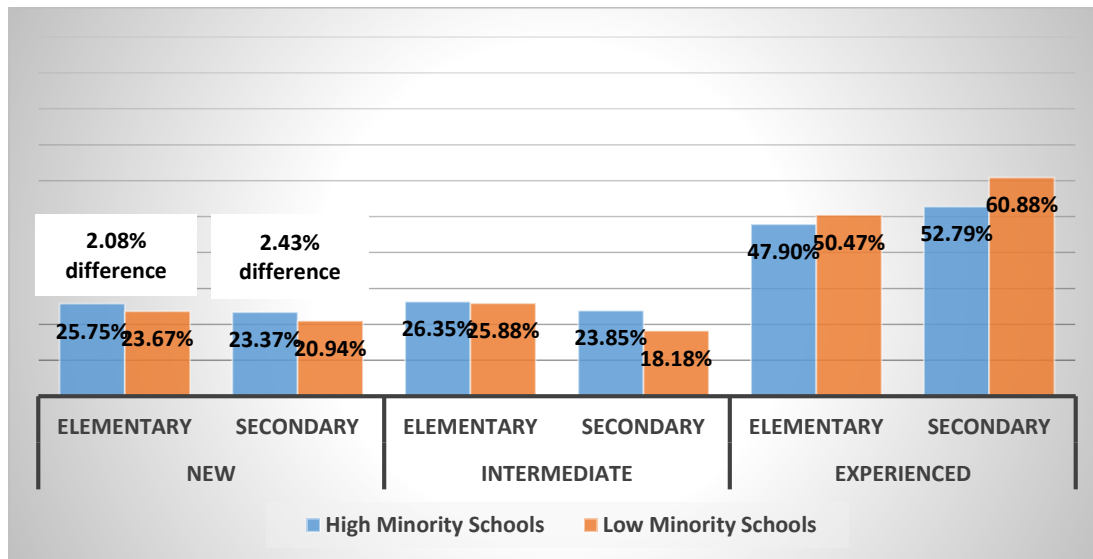
Equity strengths and gaps are revealed as the data were analyzed and the focus questions were answered. As mentioned in the key terminology, a percentage difference of $>5.0\%$ was considered an *equity gap* while a percentage difference of $\leq 5.0\%$ was considered an *equity strength*. Below are graphical representations of the equity strengths and gaps by focus question using the HQT Report.

1. To what extent are “high poverty schools” being taught by an “inexperienced teacher” compared to “low poverty schools”?



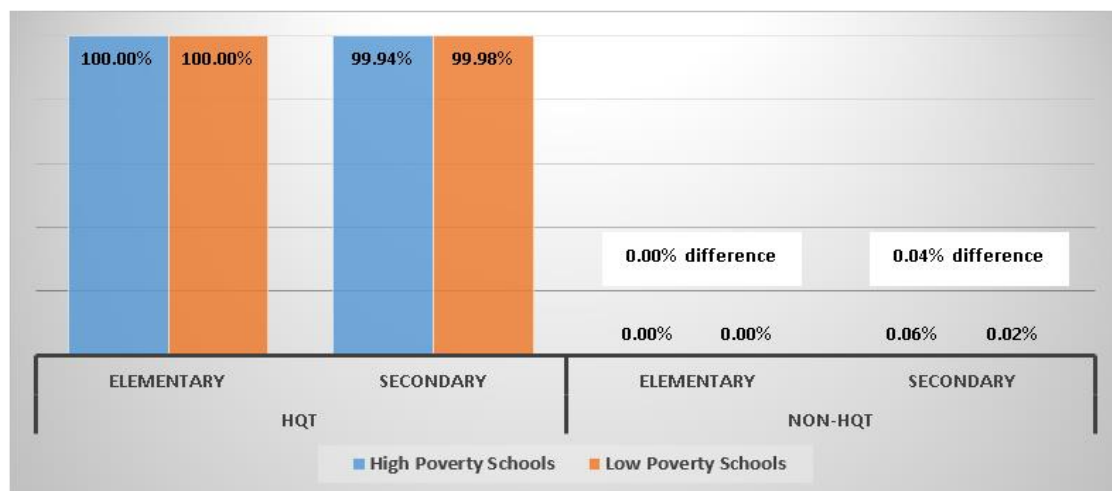
There was a 7.3% difference in high poverty secondary schools compared to low poverty secondary schools being taught by new, inexperienced teachers. There was a 5.51% difference at the elementary school level between high and low poverty schools. The State Equity Initiative Planning Committee members considered these differences an *equity gap*.

- To what extent are students in “high minority schools” being taught by an “inexperienced teacher” compared to students in “low minority schools”?



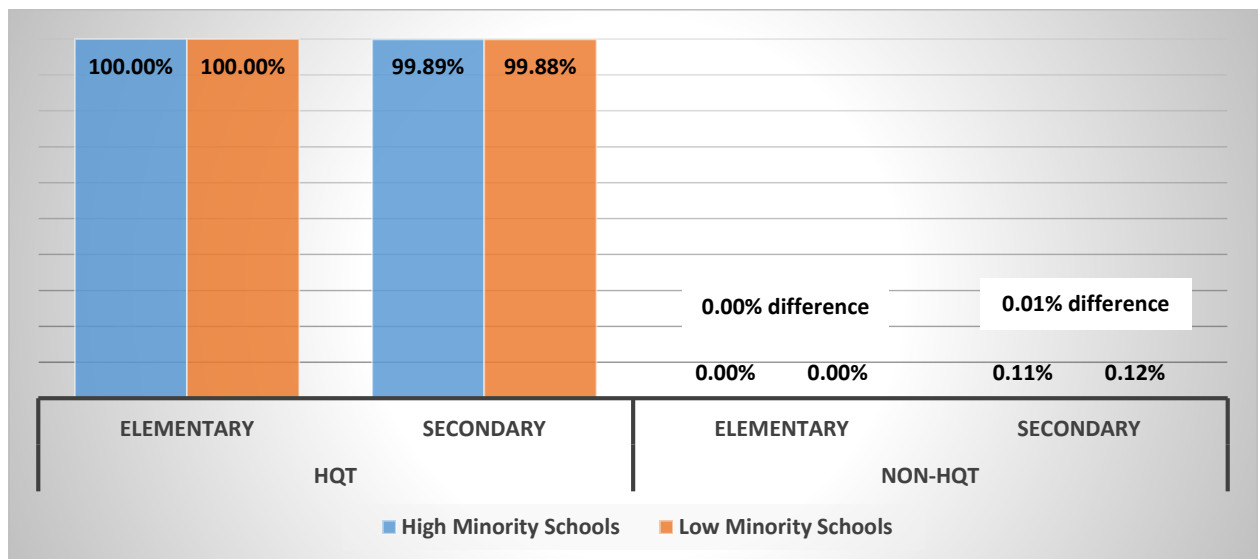
There was a 2.43% difference in high minority secondary schools compared to low minority secondary schools being taught by new, inexperienced teachers. There was a 2.08% difference at the elementary school level between high and low minority schools. The State Equity Initiative Planning Committee members considered these differences an *equity strength*.

- To what extent are “high poverty schools” being taught by an “unqualified teacher” compared to “”?



There was a 0.04% difference in high poverty secondary schools compared to low poverty secondary schools being taught by unqualified teachers. There was a 0.00% difference at the elementary school level between high and low poverty schools. The State Equity Initiative Planning Committee members considered these differences an *equity strength*.

4. To what extent are students in “high minority schools” being taught by an “unqualified teacher” compared to students in “low minority schools”?



There was a 0.01% difference in students in high minority secondary schools compared to students in low minority secondary schools being taught by unqualified teachers. There was a 0.00% difference in students in high minority elementary school level compared to students in low minority elementary schools. The State Equity Initiative Planning Committee members considered these differences an *equity strength*.

Planning Committee Survey findings revealed numerous needs for North Dakota schools, including:

- teacher and school leader recruitment and retention,
- teacher shortage,
- mentoring and support for new teachers, and
- inequitable access to professional development.

The State Equity Initiative Planning Committee members considered these to be *equity gaps*. Given the Committee members’ extensive knowledge and experience with education in North Dakota and based on these data, the following were considered equity gaps by the Committee members:

- Higher levels of new teachers teaching in high poverty schools than in low poverty schools;
- Teacher recruitment and retention;
- Teacher shortage areas; and,
- Equitable Access to high quality professional development (PD).

When the *No Child Left Behind* Act was signed into law in 2002, the State of North Dakota adopted the major equivalency requirements into the North Dakota Century Code (NDCC § 67.1-02-03-07). This strong alignment between *No Child Left Behind* and North Dakota Century

Code required all North Dakota educators to meet the *No Child Left Behind* requirements to teach in North Dakota. These 13 years of alignment have contributed to the low equity issues across the state.

Quantifying the percentages provided in the report is a challenge for North Dakota as student data is collected separately than teacher data. We are not able to provide exact figures due to the disjointed collection process. We can summarize our overall student population in relation to the distribution of teachers. To put these quantities into perspective, during the 2013-2014 school year, 103,242 students were enrolled within our public schools (24,556 in high poverty schools and 78,686 in low poverty schools). The student poverty data cannot be consistently disaggregated by school (elementary and secondary) and cannot be tracked back to teachers.

This is an area the state is well aware of and will be working toward addressing for measuring future metrics relating to equity.

When examining all of the course data provided in this report, the State of North Dakota holds firm that the percentages less than 5% are seen as strengths and impact a minimal number of students throughout the state's educational system.

Strategies for Eliminating Equity Gaps

Theory of Action

The North Dakota Department of Instruction is committed to ensuring that every student in a North Dakota school is taught by an excellent teacher. The North Dakota Department of Instruction recognizes that to accomplish this goal that systemic strategies are employed to eliminate the identified equity gaps. The North Dakota Department of Instruction's plan to eliminate the identified gaps is predicated on the following theory of action:

If a comprehensive approach to the human capital management and support of teachers is systemically implemented and implementation is monitored and modified over time,

Then North Dakota school districts will be better able to recruit, retain, and develop excellent teachers such that all students have equitable access to excellent teaching to help them achieve their highest potential in school and beyond.

Identification of Root Causes

The root cause analysis process employed by the State Equity Initiative Planning Committee was supported by staff from the North Central Comprehensive Center and Center for Great Teachers and Leaders. The process consisted of three steps:

1. Identification of Relevant and Available Data: The guiding questions were developed and data needed to answer the guiding questions were identified. The data were provided by the Management Information Systems Unit within the NDDPI. Charts were developed as user-friendly, graphical representations of the data to assist with the data analysis.

2. Analysis of Data and Identification of Equity Strengths and Gaps: The State Equity Initiative Planning Committee identified the equity strengths and gaps based on the data charts. The identified equity gaps were used for the root cause analysis.
3. Analysis of Root Causes: With support from the North Central Comprehensive Center and Center for Great Teachers and Leaders staff co-facilitation, the State Equity Initiative Planning Committee brainstormed root causes that may underlay the identified equity gaps, using the WHY? Method. This Method includes three steps:
 - 1) Identify plausible contributing factors(s).
 - 2) Ask “Why?” of each equity gap and answer “Because...” at least three times.
 - 3) Stop asking “Why?” when a key contributing factor of the equity gap is revealed.
 - 4) The root causes were then categorized by themes.

As a result of step 2, the following equity gaps emerged:

- higher levels of new teachers teaching in high poverty schools than in low poverty schools teacher and school leader recruitment and retention,
- teacher shortage,
- mentoring and support for new teachers, and
- inequitable access to professional development.

For step 3, Table 1 presents the root causes for each of the equity gap as identified by the State Equity Initiative Planning Committee during their second meeting.

Table 1. Root Causes by Equity Gap

Equity Gap	Root Causes	Metric
Higher levels of new teachers teaching in high poverty schools than in low poverty schools	<u>High poverty schools are less desirable</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old schools • Ill-equipped schools/classrooms • Less parental support • Lower beginning salary for teachers • Higher level of teacher responsibility • Lower level of community support for education • Low value of education • Tax base/funding for reservation schools • Parent education/priorities • Political will and values • Insufficient staff and time • Insufficient specialty teachers • Wage inequity statewide 	School District Consolidated Application Data
	<u>Location issues</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No housing Rural/no amenities 	

Equity Gap	Root Causes	Metric
Recruitment and Retention	<u>Low Perception of Teaching Profession</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowered perception of teaching profession • Sense of hopelessness/ lower professional success <u>Lack of Teacher Support</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of principal support due to their lack of time, authority in decision making, skills/knowledge to be an instructional leader • Principals don't know there's a parent-teacher conflict • Low level of teacher autonomy Low level of teacher collaboration	Reported Vacant Positions by Administrators and ESPB JETS Marketing Plan Survey
Teacher Shortage Areas	<u>Low Perception of Teaching Profession</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowered perception of teaching profession • No interest in teaching (according to high school graduates) • Lack of education prep programs in secondary schools (i.e., DECA) • Lack of positive aspects of teaching being marketed • Lack of educator advocacy of the teaching profession • Lack of public knowledge of teaching profession <u>Teachers Leaving Profession</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher retirement 	Reports by ESPB Develop Annual Teacher Shortage report compiled by NDDPI
Equitable Access to High Quality Professional Development (PD)	<u>High Pressure due to Policy Factors</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top down PD mandates • Federal education policy • State mandates • Lack of federal & state funding <u>Uncertain of PD Quality to Meet Teacher and Student Needs</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No data on PD quality • PD not meeting student needs/informing instruction • Implementation of PD is inconsistent • Data collection is only the mandated data collection • Data collected is process data; not outcome data • Lack of funding for PD data collection • Lack of definition of "high quality" PD • Local control of PD implementation <u>Lack of Teacher Support</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silos/isolation • Lack of teacher-directed PD • Change in role of principal to instructional leader • Lack of PD time 	Surveys Registration Counts End-of-Year Professional Development Reports Consolidated Application Data

Community Expert Proposal

North Dakota, like many other states, is struggling with a teacher shortage. School is starting statewide and there are still many unfilled positions.

A statewide teacher shortage task force assembled in June by Superintendent of Public Instruction Kirsten Baesler advanced a proposal to the Education Standards & Practice Board to give school districts that are having difficulty hiring teachers the authority to request a hardship waiver.

The waiver would allow a community expert to become a classroom teacher in the subject area of his or her expertise. For example, a school district could hire an experienced farmer who lacks a college degree in education to be licensed to teach vocational agriculture.

North Dakota's Education Standards & Practice Board, which is the state's teacher licensing agency, voted unanimously to endorse the proposal. Under its terms, waiver applications would be submitted to the Education Standards & Practice Board, which would decide whether to approve them. The proposal is currently being reviewed by the Governor.

This issue surfaced at the time the NDDPI was preparing to submit our revised State Equity plan. We requested and received a two week extension to get resolve to this issue and incorporate it into our plan.

To date, the Governor has not approved the community expert proposal. The NDDPI shares this information as it is applicable to the work encompassed through the State Equity plan.

Regardless of the outcome, the community expert proposal only applies to non-core positions, so we are not in violation of any federal requirement.

Selected Strategies

During and after the third stakeholder meeting, the State Equity Initiative Planning Committee identified practical strategies to address the root causes. Table 2 aligns the equity gaps with identified root causes, and selected strategies. Also presented in Table 2 are the responsible party/parties for each of the selected strategies as well as the essential activities that will be taken for each strategy. Please note that some strategies were used to address multiple equity gaps. For example, signing bonuses may be used to attract and recruit teachers to the field and in areas where there are teacher shortages.

The tables presented on the preceding pages are an initial drafting of strategies identified by the State Equity Initiative Planning Committee, as well as by their constituency groups, through the planning process. The tables are meant to be working documents that will change and be adjusted as we begin the implementation phase of the state equity plan. In each table, we have listed the lead parties responsible for implementing each strategy. As we begin to work on each strategy, we will broaden the groups to collaborate with other stakeholders.

Table 2. Selected Strategies, Activities, and Responsible Party for Equity Gaps based on Root Causes

Equity Gap	Root Causes	Strategy	Activities	Responsible Party	Timeline
Slightly higher levels of new teachers teaching in high poverty schools than in low poverty schools	<u>High poverty schools are less desirable</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old schools • Ill-equipped schools/classrooms • Less parental support • Lower beginning salary for teachers • Higher level of teacher responsibility • Lower level of community support for education • Low value of education • Tax base/funding for reservation schools • Parent education/priorities • Political will and values • Insufficient staff and time • Insufficient specialty teachers • Wage inequity statewide 	Signing bonuses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create guidance and resources for school districts on ability to offer signing bonuses to attract highly qualified experienced teachers • Provide a mechanism to share practice being utilized within the state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDDPI • School Board Association • North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders • BIE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall 2015
		Loan forgiveness program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a list of all known loan forgiveness programs • Create a website to provide guidance and links to available programs • Disseminate information on loan forgiveness programs to teachers statewide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDDPI • North Dakota University System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer 2015
		Develop <i>Grow Your Own</i> teacher program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop guidance for districts on assisting highly qualified paraprofessionals to become teachers • Pay existing staff to get further educated or endorsements for hard to fill positions such as ELL or special education • Sponsor paraprofessional training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDDPI • Education Standards and Practices Board • Regional Educational Associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2016
		Recruit retired teachers to return to classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer training to reintroduce retired teachers into the classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Educational Associations • Local school districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2016
	<u>Location issues</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No housing • Rural/no amenities 	Provide incentives to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop guidance for districts on using incentives to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers • Create a teacher mortgage assistance program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local school districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall 2015

Equity Gap	Root Causes	Strategy	Activities	Responsible Party	Timeline
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide housing 		
Recruitment and Retention	<u>Low Perception of Teaching Profession</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowered perception of teaching profession • Sense of hopelessness/ lower professional success 	Develop a plan to positively market the teaching profession across the state.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with universities and districts to provide teacher informational booths at career fairs • Promote programs such as the Junior Elementary Teaching System (JETS) • Offer dual credit to entice high school students into the profession 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDDPI • North Dakota University System • Local school districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2016
	<u>Lack of Teacher Support</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of principal support due to their lack of time, authority in decision making, skills/knowledge to be an instructional leader • Principals don't know there's a parent-teacher conflict • Low level of teacher autonomy • Low level of teacher collaboration 	Signing bonus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create guidance and resources for school districts on ability to offer signing bonuses • Provide a mechanism to share practices being utilized within the state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDDPI • School Board Association • North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall 2015
		Professional development & support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create guidance and resources for teacher induction programs • Work with REAs to sponsor high quality professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDDPI • North Dakota University System • Regional Education Associations • Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2016
		Investment in career & professional growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guidance on loan forgiveness program availability • Provide opportunities for advancement • Provide financial assistance for professional growth • Provide opportunities to obtain additional credentials and endorsements • Work with counselors to promote teaching to younger students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDDPI • North Dakota University System • Local school districts • Regional Education Associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall 2016

Equity Gap	Root Causes	Strategy	Activities	Responsible Party	Timeline
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with media to promote teaching 		
		Provide instructional leadership training and support to principals across the state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide statewide leadership training • Work with LEAD center to create a leadership academy to provide principal mentoring • Develop a principal mentoring program • Provide strategies to administrators on parent and community engagement to deal with difficult situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Education Associations • Local school districts • ND LEAD Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015-2016 School Year
		Implement professional learning communities to foster teacher collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a checklist of available trainings statewide pertaining to PLCS • Create guidance on effective induction programs • Promote PLC concept 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDDPI • Local school districts • Regional Education Associations • ESPB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall 2015
		Recruit retired teachers and student teachers into the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer training to reintroduce retired teachers into the classroom • Pay student teachers to teach under the direction of a supervising teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Educational Associations • Local school districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2016
		Improve working conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer opportunity for teacher mentoring and collaboration • Provide an in-depth, rigorous induction and mentoring program for all new teachers in high-poverty, high needs schools • Strengthen leadership in low-performing schools and leadership preparation programs • Implement a coaching program to provide outside feedback to schools • Encourage districts to explore and implement merit pay that awards effective teachers for improving student achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDDPI • Local school districts • Regional Education Associations • ESPB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015-2016 School Year

Equity Gap	Root Causes	Strategy	Activities	Responsible Party	Timeline
Statewide Teacher Shortage	<u>Low Perception of Teaching Profession</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lowered perception of teaching profession No interest in teaching (according to high school graduates) Lack of education prep programs in secondary schools (i.e., DECA) Lack of positive aspects of teaching being marketed Lack of educator advocacy of the teaching profession Lack of public knowledge of teaching profession <u>Teachers Leaving Profession</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher retirement 	Distance learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize Center for Distance Learning Utilize ITV Services Share teachers among districts or REAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local school districts and school administrators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2015-2016 School Year
		Cross-district sharing of teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share and disseminate best practices for sharing of staff Promote cross district sharing of teachers 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2015
		Signing bonus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create guidance and resources for school districts on ability to offer signing bonuses Provide a mechanism to share practice being utilized within the state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDDPI School Board Association North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2015
		Develop education preparation programs for secondary schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide guidance on how to develop and implement a Junior Elementary Teaching System (JETS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDDPI Local school district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring 2016
		Loan forgiveness program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a list of all known Loan Forgiveness programs Create a website to provide guidance and links to available programs Disseminate information on loan forgiveness programs to teachers statewide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDDPI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2015
		Develop <i>Grow Your Own</i> teacher program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide guidance on how to develop and implement a Junior Elementary Teaching System (JETS) Assist highly qualified paraprofessionals to become teachers Pay existing staff to get further educated or endorsements for hard to fill positions such as ELL or Special Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDDPI Local school district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring 2016
		Recruit retired teachers to return to classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer training to reintroduce retired teachers into the classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local school districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring 2016

Equity Gap	Root Causes	Strategy	Activities	Responsible Party	Timeline
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Education Associations 	
Equitable Access to High Quality Professional Development (PD)	<u>High Pressure due to Policy Factors</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top down PD mandates Federal education policy State mandates Lack of federal & state funding <u>Uncertain of PD Quality to Meet Teacher and Student Needs</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No data on PD quality PD not meeting student needs/informing instruction Implementation of PD is inconsistent Data collection is only the mandated data collection Data collected is process data; not outcome data Lack of funding for PD data collection Lack of definition of “high quality” PD Local control of PD implementation <u>Lack of Teacher Support</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Silos/isolation 	Regional trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDDPI-sponsored training regionally Utilize REAs for regional trainings Leverage collective resources to sponsor professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDDPI Local school districts Regional Education Associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2015-2016 School Year
		Develop process of how professional development is determined from the bottom up and share with districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminate guidance on state and federal professional development requirements Share and disseminate best practices statewide via newsletters and list serves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDDPI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2015-2016 School Year
		Develop process to collect data on PD implementation and impact on teacher practice and student learning and share with districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize existing mechanisms to collect data on professional development (i.e., consolidated application) Provide guidance to schools on collecting impact data on the effectiveness of professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDDPI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring 2016

Equity Gap	Root Causes	Strategy	Activities	Responsible Party	Timeline
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of teacher-directed PD • Change in role of principal to instructional leader • Lack of PD time 	Bring highly qualified professional development to districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with ND University System • Provide information on trainings that can be brought into schools rather than sending staff out • North Dakota agencies collaborate to bring high quality professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDDPI • Regional Education Associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015-2016 School Year

Resources

The State of North Dakota has many resources at its disposal to help implement the State Equity Plan. In order to adequately address equity issues statewide, the NDDPI has both financial resources as well as human resources to ensure that the strategies outlined in the plan are implemented in order to assist schools and districts in ensuring that all students have access to excellent educators.

The NDDPI has several categories of funding available to assist with equity issues statewide. The federal Title programs within the ESEA are all consolidated within one unit in the NDDPI. Therefore, any initiatives or resources focused on addressing equity issues can draw from the various Title programs (e.g., Title I, Title II Part A, Title II State Discretionary, and Title III) that all are required to ensure compliance with equity provisions. In addition, there is strong collaboration with the Special Education unit in the NDDPI. Special Education has multiple members on the State Equity Initiative Planning Committee and has been an integral part of developing the statewide plan.

All North Dakota districts annually complete a consolidated application to budget and access their federal Title funding. Each district is required to complete a narrative section on the consolidated application and outline measures employed by the district to ensure all students have equal access to highly qualified teachers. If barriers exist, the district addresses strategies that will be put in place to resolve those equity gaps.

The State Legislature also provides financial resources to address equity issues and ensure that all students have access to excellent educators. The State Legislature supports a statewide mentoring program through ESPB. This program ensures that new teachers receive the guidance and support in those critical first years of teaching. In addition, the State Legislature provides funding for mandatory professional development for all North Dakota teachers to ensure that educators receive high quality professional development aimed at addressing key educational issues in each district.

The NDDPI also has a significant number of human resources available to assist in the process of addressing equity statewide. Within the NDDPI, multiple units are part of the State Equity Initiative Planning Committee and will also be integrally involved in the implementation phase of the plan. These staff include:

Robert Marthaller	Assistant Superintendent
Greg Gallagher	Standards and Achievement
Steve Snow	Statewide Data Systems
Sherry Houdek	Teacher & School Effectiveness
Lucy Fredericks	Indian/Multicultural Education
Gerry Teevens	Special Education
Peg Wagner	Academic Support
Laurie Matzke	Federal Title Programs

The NDDPI plans to keep the State Equity Initiative Planning Committee involved as we move into the implementation phase. The NDDPI will frequently survey members and seek input on the various resources to be created.

The director of the ESPB has been and will continue to be a key player in the State Equity Plan. As the ESPB is responsible for the licensure of teachers and also oversees the state-funded mentoring program, it will be crucial to maintain communication and work together to roll out the various strategies identified within the State Equity Plan.

The combination of financial resources and well-informed department and stakeholder groups came together as supports for the North Dakota State Equity Initiative. For these reasons, North Dakota has the capacity and framework in place to implement this initiative.

Timelines and Milestones

The NDDPI has identified within our State Equity Plan numerous strategies for districts as they address the teacher equity issue in their school system. On pages 16-21 of this equity plan, the chart identifies strategies and activities for addressing teacher equity and also identifies a timeline for guidance on the various strategies to be completed.

In addition, below we have created a chart that highlights the milestones for the development and implementation of North Dakota's State Equity plan.

Regional Administrative Workshops	May 4 and 6, 2015
Public comment period on draft of Equity plan	May-June 2015
NDDPI submits State Equity Initiative Plan to USDE	June 1, 2015
Begin to implement strategies outlined in plan	July 1, 2015
State Equity Initiative plan approved by USDE	August 2015
Consolidated Application due date	August 28, 2015
Survey State Equity Initiative Planning Committee	September 2015
Collaborate with existing statewide trainings to provide updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AdvancEd • NDCEL • ND School Board Associations 	October 2015
ESEA Reauthorization training	October 2015
Reconvene State Equity Initiative Planning Committee to discuss implemented strategies and future planning	November 2015

Ongoing Monitoring and Support

The NDDPI will ensure ongoing monitoring and support through various data collection methods. These data collection methods will provide the NDDPI with the data needed to determine those schools and districts that may need to be monitored or reviewed in relationship to the equitable distribution of high quality teachers. The data collected will provide the information that the NDDPI needs to understand where strategy implementation issues are occurring. The data will be reviewed by the NDDPI staff and the State Equity Initiative Planning Committee members on an annual basis to determine what course corrections and adjustments need to be made.

1. The review and analysis of data from districts

North Dakota school districts submit data regarding teacher assignments through the MIS03 report, which is available for both the regular school year and state summer school. All contracted professional educational staff members working in North Dakota schools must complete an MIS03 (SFN 9111) form on an annual basis through the State Automated Reporting System (STARS). The two general classifications of employees involved are as follows:

- A. Professional Educational Staff Member - A professional educational staff member is a person who is performing activities regarded as professional in the field of education by the laws and regulations governing licensing in the State of North Dakota. All professional educational personnel employed in an elementary, junior high/middle, and/or secondary school operated by a Local Education Agency (LEA) including public schools, career and technology centers, special education units, schools operated by the BIA, state institution schools, and nonpublic schools must complete an MIS03 form. Only persons holding the following positions must complete an MIS03 form: assistant director, assistant principal, assistant superintendent, coordinator, director, school counselor, counselor designate, instructional programmer, library media specialist, principal, pupil personnel, school psychologist, speech-language pathologist, superintendent of schools, supervisor, and teachers. Full-time contracted substitute teachers do not complete an MIS03. County superintendents and assistant county superintendents are not required to complete an MIS03 form unless they are holding additional position(s) previously listed.
- B. Positions Which Do Not Require a Teaching License - Persons assigned to positions not listed in section A above (e.g., social workers) must be listed on the PER02 Nonlicensed Personnel Form (SFN 9113) even if they have a license in their area of specialization. TEACHER AIDES AND PARAPROFESSIONALS *must not fill out* this form (MIS03) but *must be included* on the PER02.

The MIS03 is submitted on an annual basis by all schools and districts on or before September 19. Schools and districts must submit revised MIS03 forms to reflect any

changes throughout the school year. Personnel revisions include employment of new staff, termination of employment, and assignment changes (e.g., new courses, course cancellations).

The MIS03 collects the school and district information associated with professional teaching staff, their North Dakota Educator's Professional License number, name, date of birth, gender, ethnicity and race, total salary, contract period, school's employee number, number of years of educational experience (in-state and out-of-state), previous year employment history, number of years of contracted administrative experience, FTE, position assignment, area of responsibility, highest earned degree, and courses in which they are teaching. These data will be used to assess the extent to which new teachers are teaching in high poverty schools compared to low poverty schools, monitoring this equity gap.

In addition, schools submit data to the Federal Title Programs office via the Consolidated Application for Federal Title funding, which includes:

- ✓ Reporting the number of core academic classes that were taught by highly qualified teachers the previous school year, which at this time must be 100%
- ✓ Title II Part A Funding Priorities – Every school district must conduct a needs assessment to determine the needs of the teaching force in order to have all students meet challenging state content and academic achievement standards. After conducting a needs assessment, districts must target Title II Part A funds to schools within the district that have the lowest proportion of highly qualified teachers, have the largest class size, or are identified for school improvement under Title I.
- ✓ Equity provision – Each district accepting federal funds must include in its application a description of the steps it proposes to take to ensure that all students are taught by a highly qualified teacher. Further, specific questions will be added to gather data on if and how the district is implementing the selected strategies. (Appendix D)

2. The application and Federal Title Programs consolidated monitoring process

The Federal Title Programs office has an established consolidated monitoring process for Title I and Title II of the ESEA. All districts are monitored on a rotating schedule. When districts are monitored, staff review the various components related to the equitable distribution of teachers statewide. A review of each district's needs assessment and professional development plan is conducted. Staff ensure that each school disseminates information to parents regarding the Parent's Right to Know clause within Title I law. This document shows parents the distribution of teachers, whether or not each teacher is highly qualified, the years of experience each teacher has, and any endorsements held. In monitoring Title II Part A, NDDPI staff will address the distribution of highly qualified teachers and access to high quality professional development, which will monitor another equity gap. (Appendix E)

3. Through teacher licensure and certification

In North Dakota, the Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) is responsible for teacher licensure and certification. This entity is not part of the NDDPI, but rather a self-functioning board supported by the state and teacher licensure fees. The NDDPI works closely with the ESPB regarding all teacher licensing issues, mentoring programs, and induction programs for new teachers. The ESPB Executive Director was a member of the State Equity Initiative Planning Committee and attended every meeting to provide guidance and support on ways in which ESPB can support the implementation of the selected strategies to close equity gaps.

The ESPB monitors closely the highly qualified teacher provision to ensure that gaps are not increasing in any particular area and works hard to ensure that the highly qualified provisions are adhered to. The board has implemented a system that fines both the teacher and administrator if a teacher is found to be teaching out of field.

4. Through the approval and accreditation of schools

In North Dakota, the accreditation of schools is done through AdvancED through contracted services. The NDDPI's Teacher and School Effectiveness unit is responsible for managing the process through AdvancED as well as maintaining the reporting of teachers and administrators. Pursuant to the school approval and accreditation provisions defined within the North Dakota Century Code and the North Dakota Administrative Code, the NDDPI stipulates that the State of North Dakota has established meaningful compliance provisions that enforce the HQT provisions set forth within the NCLB act and all subsequent USDE guidance documentation. The state has established clear definitions for highly qualified teachers through its licensure assurances. The state has established a valid and reliable means of monitoring and validating the compliance of proper assignments for all teachers. The combined authority of the state's teacher licensure laws and rules with the state's school approval and accreditation laws and rules set a clear policy for ensuring compliance with the provisions of HQT. The state has clearly linked the state's HQT provisions to the state's school approval and accreditation provisions. Specifically, these provisions within state law and rules require that all approved schools meet the provisions of HQT or face noncompliance with approval law, accreditation rules, and possible financial sanctions. The State of North Dakota has established a zero-tolerance policy for non-compliance with the provisions of HQT. Effective July 1, 2006, any school that assigns a teacher outside his/her approved area of licensure will be in violation of the state's teacher licensure law, state approval law, and state accreditation rules.

Ongoing Monitoring and Support

Key dates for progress monitoring

1. Review & Analysis of Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MIS03 	Fall 2015 Fall 2016 Due October 15 th Review November - January
2. Consolidated Application Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting number of Core Academic classes taught by highly qualified teachers Title II Part A Funding Priorities Equity Provision 	Fall 2015 Fall 2016 Consolidated application due in August Review and approval in fall
3. Consolidated Monitoring	Winter/Spring 2016 Winter/Spring 2017 Monitoring occurs January-March
4. ESPB Monitoring & Oversight	Ongoing
5. Approval & Accreditation of Schools	Fall 2016 Fall 2017 Due to NDDPI October 1 st AdvancEd reviews - Ongoing
6. Review of HQT Data for EdFacts Submissions	Fall 2015 Fall 2016 Review August-September

Responsible Entities

There are multiple entities that will share the responsibility for the ongoing monitoring of the State Equity Initiative. The lead agency is the NDDPI. The Federal Title Programs, Standards and Achievement unit, and the Teacher & School Effectiveness units will all share in the responsibility for monitoring and collecting data pertaining to the North Dakota State Equity Plan. Questions regarding the State Equity Plan can be directed to any of the following NDDPI staff.

Laurie Matzke, Director
Federal Title Programs
(701) 328-2284
lmatzke@nd.gov

Greg Gallagher, Director
Standards and Achievement
(701) 328-1838
ggallagher@nd.gov

Director
Teacher & School Effectiveness
(701) 328-2755

Specifically, these NDDPI staff will be responsible for data collection regarding the strategies that will be implemented to eliminate the equity gaps in North Dakota. In addition, NDDPI personnel are responsible for monitoring the federal Title II provisions with the ESEA. The NDDPI also monitors the level of professional development participation through the annual professional development report submitted by local school districts, as required by state statute. This report provides general information regarding the level of professional development accessed by local school districts statewide. The NDDPI reviews each local school district's professional development plan as an element of its ESEA consolidated monitoring efforts. These data collections provide insight into each local school district's priorities and allocations. These reports and plans provide a base for the NDDPI to provide technical assistance regarding the school district's longer term personnel planning.

Public Reporting of Implementation Progress

When the NDDPI began the initial planning process for the State Equity Plan Initiative in the fall of 2014, we made a decision to be forthright and transparent in our reporting of the implementation process. We created a new website where all information could be housed and publicized the URL in correspondence to the field and in our monthly newsletter.

Each time the NDDPI prepared to meet with the stakeholders during an equity planning committee meeting, we would contact members with potential dates so we could ensure our meetings had the highest attendance possible. In addition, we would ask committee members for input on agenda items. Committee members always received a copy of the agenda before the meeting convened (Appendix B). Again, to ensure transparency, detailed minutes of each meeting were recorded, disseminated to committee members, and posted on our website (Appendix C).

The NDDPI will continuously monitor statewide equity issues and publicly report on the progress. The intent is to continue to convene the State Equity Initiative Planning Committee periodically to provide input and support. These meetings will be publicly reported on the NDDPI website. In addition, we will continue use of the state, LEA, and school report card

system to monitor and publicly report progress of LEA's toward reaching and maintaining the goal of having all core academic subject teachers highly qualified. It is believed that the actions and strategies described in this plan will increase the number of highly qualified teachers and will target access to those teachers to LEAs with hard-to-staff schools.

Public Reporting of Implementation Progress

Key Events

Submission of State Equity Plan Feedback from USDE Resubmission of Plan	June 2015 July 2015 August 2015
NDDPI Summer Administrators Conference (Implementation Plans Shared)	July 2015
NDDPI Newsletters	Monthly
Implement Tier I Strategies:	
✓ Create Guidance on Signing Bonuses	August 2015
✓ Gather Information from Other States	September 2015
✓ Loan Forgiveness – Website Established	September 2015
✓ Creation of Leadership Academy	Fall 2015
✓ Recruitment Task Force Committee Meetings	July/Ongoing
✓ Statewide Marketing Plan Implementation	September 2015
✓ Survey Schools on JETS Program	September/October 2015
✓ Professional Development Grants to REAs	August 2015
✓ Implement Community Expert Initiative	September/October 2015
Fall School Improvement Conference (Implementation Plans Shared)	September 2015
Implement Tier II Strategies	TBD

Performance Metrics

The NDDPI will use multiple measures to review both the short-term and long-term performance metrics to assess progress toward achieving our goals. In the short-term, the key performance metrics that will be used to assess progress include end-of-year reports, feedback from educators, and review of data provided on the 2015-2016 consolidated application for federal Title funding. There are several end-of-year reports from the 2014-2015 school year that can be reviewed to assess the data provided.

Another performance metric to review would be feedback from our North Dakota educators. The NDDPI has already started the process of implementing the numerous strategies outlined in our State Equity Plan. As we begin to release guidance and resources to the field on our website, we will begin to get feedback and can collect and summarize that feedback for reporting purposes at a later date. For example, the NDDPI is currently working to create a website on loan forgiveness. Since the use of loan forgiveness is one of the strategies listed in several areas identified as a gap, we have a need to gather and disseminate information on this topic. The newly created website will provide resources and information on various strategies (i.e., loan forgiveness programs available to teachers).

Lastly, a third short-term metric that we use to assess progress toward our goals is the review of data submitted in the 2015-2016 consolidated application for federal Title funding. New for the 2015-2016 school year, all districts need to complete a narrative section and outline how they are ensuring equity and how they can demonstrate that all students are being taught by a highly qualified and effective teacher. Districts will need to identify strategies that they will employ in the 2015-2016 school year to address equity issues district-wide.

Similarly, in the long-term, there are key performance metrics to assess progress toward achieving our goals. Some of these long-term metrics include reviewing reports, monitoring Title I and Title II programs, and reconvening the State Equity Initiative Planning Committee for review and input.

Conclusion

The NDDPI has submitted this State Equity Plan per a directive from the USDE consistent with the requirements outlined in the ESEA. This plan is intended to ensure that every student in every school is taught by an excellent educator. In North Dakota, the process used to generate a State Equity Plan included the creation of the State Equity Initiative Planning Committee. Great care was taken to ensure that the Committee included broad representation from all of the various education stakeholder groups that are affected by the issue of teacher equity.

Historically, North Dakota has had minimal gaps statewide among our schools with regard to the extent that poor students are taught by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers, as North Dakota put the federal NCLB act teacher quality requirements into state law when the bill was enacted in 2001. As required under the directive, North Dakota has summarized the equity gaps that currently do exist and has provided charts that reflect the data available.

The State Equity Plan has identified four key gaps within the plan:

- Slightly higher levels of new teachers teaching in high poverty schools than in low poverty schools
- Teacher and school leader recruitment and retention,
- Teacher shortage, and
- Equitable access to high quality professional development.

For each gap identified, the state has outlined the selected strategies that will be employed to address the root causes. Going forward, the NDDPI will work to implement each strategy by leading the collective effort of the responsible parties. We believe the strategies identified are achievable and realistic and will assist in providing statewide equity in the distribution of highly qualified and effective teachers. Additionally, the plan has identified how North Dakota will continuously monitor and provide support on the strategies identified in the plan. The plan has identified the short-term and long-term performance metrics that will be reviewed and assessed toward achieving our goals. It is our hope that this plan will help ensure that poor and minority students are not taught by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers at higher rates than other children. The strategies outlined in the plan are intended to ensure that every student in North Dakota graduates from high school prepared to enter college or the workforce.